

“... to reign does not mean to be delighted, it rather means to delight others; it means to provide them with the benefits of Nature and to defend society against its own injustice as well as against its neighbours... to govern a State implies to ensure men with all the advantages the Author of Nature attributed to the establishment of Societies...”

This extract is from the source by Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, a French historian and author, in his book *Leçons de Morale, de politique et de droit public* (Versailles: De l'imprimerie du Département des affaires étrangères) which was published in 1773. I will refer to this extract as “Principles of Monarchy” during this gobbet. This source is from the pages 15-16, 21-26, 49, 76-80, 139-48.

Jacob–Nicolas Moreau wrote the *Principles of Monarchy* for the education and training of the Dauphin, which is the next in line to the throne. Throughout the book, Moreau defends the power of the monarchy and the King to rule France without any opposition.¹

This book was probably seen by many that were literate including the upper class. The book was meant for the Dauphin, Louis XVI. The whole book was perhaps a suggestion not to be like his father and to be more considerate of his subjects and the struggles they face. Rather than being self-indulgent like his predecessor, Moreau wants the Dauphin to be different and a better ruler and monarch.

Moreau underlines that the current King, Louis XV, must be very involved in governing France. He also explains that if the King does not step up, he would no longer have the admiration or be able to inspire his subjects and his people. Being the King and simply occupying the throne is no longer enough like his predecessors did. Moreover, Moreau also wrote, that only an active and responsible King could preserve the liberty of the French people by defending law and order within his realm.²

Moreau wrote “reign does not mean to be delighted” which can be interpreted as the author not appreciating perhaps how King Louis XV is currently spending the country’s money, or how he is governing France. Moreau is trying to say that the King would rather spend money on himself, his courtiers, entertainment, architecture and lavish, grand parties than helping his subjects and their lives.

To understand the extract picked out, reading around and the rest of the source must be conducted. Moreau does not think that the power of the King is “absolute”³ suggesting it is not God given. This goes against the traditional views and ideas that God appoints the monarchs.

There is a noticeable style of language that Moreau used and that was “Author of Nature” which suggests to a God like entity but not the Christian God. This is due to the time of the Enlightenment or the Age of Reason which can be estimated to be in the eighteenth century

¹ Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. 2019.

² Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*. 2019.

³ Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, *Principles of Monarchy*, 1773. Pg. 15-16, 21-26, 49, 76-80, 139-48.

or 1685-1815.⁴ The words “to govern a State implies to ensure men” says that perhaps that this is almost like a public discontent and out cry to the fact the King is not doing his job as the protector of the land.

This source has a huge significant to historians as it was evidence that not everyone was happy or content with Louis XV doing his job and holding his position as protector of the people and France. Moreau was clearly a supporter of having a monarchy and one ruler governing the country. The author was bias in that way but clearly does not appreciate or like the current King. Historians would have to take that into consideration. This source represents the people who wanted a new, changed monarch, and looked for that in the Dauphin.

In conclusion, Moreau clearly does not support the King at the time, which was Louis XV, as he appeared lazy, self-absorbed and perhaps out of touch with reality and the people. The extract was aimed at the successor of the throne, Louis XVI but most likely to be read by literate people such as the upper class or those who could afford education. Furthermore, the fact that he has come forward and written a book about this situation suggests that it must be a widespread discontent in the rule of France and treatment of the people.

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⁴ History Editors, The Enlightenment, 2009.